

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 12th October, 1944.

The Council met at 12 noon, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, the Hon. W. L. Heape, C. M. G., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT:

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary (Acting) Mr. M. B. Laing, O.B.E.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. E. O. Pretheroe, M.C., K.C.

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C. B. E.

The Hon. J. A. Luckhoo, K.C. (Nominated).

The Hon. J. I. deAguiar (Central Demerara).

The Hon. H. N. Critchlow (Nominated).

The Hon. Percy C. Wight, O.B.E., (Georgetown Central).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E., (Georgetown South).

The Hon. J. B. Singh, O.B.E., (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. C. R. Jacob (North Western District).

The Hon. A. G. King (Demerara River).

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E., (Nominated).

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 6th of October, 1944, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

PAPERS LAID.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Mr. McDavid) laid on the table a series of Despatches (Legislative Council Paper No. 21 of 1944) addressed by the Governor and the Officer Administering the Government, respectively, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies forwarding applications for free grants under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 1940, to meet the cost of Schemes undertaken in connection with the expansion of the Rice production in the Colony.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

VLISSENGEN LIEN. AND LACYTOWN PROPERTIES.

Mr. GONSALVES gave notice of the following questions:

1. What was the amount payable by the proprietors of lots in Lacytown in respect of the Vlissingen Lien? What amount has already been paid?

2. When will the proprietors of lots in Lacytown be fully relieved of the payment of the said lien?

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ESTATE OF JOHN DE FREITAS, DEC'D

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. M. B. Laing, Acting): I beg to move the following motion:—

THAT, with reference to the Officer Administering the Government's Message No. 11 of the 16th of September, 1944, this Council in accordance with the proviso to section 13 (3) of the Public Trustee Ordinance, Chapter 245, authorizes the payment of the balance at credit of the estate of John de Freitas, deceased, to the relatives of the said deceased as recommended by the Public Trustee, to be divided as follows:—

- (a) to Mary Agnes de Freitas \$ 73.60
 (b) to the five nephews 220.79

to be divided equally among them less the expense of \$12.46—which was incurred in tracing their whereabouts.

Hon. Members, who have read Your Excellency's Message, will know that the late Mr. John de Freitas died in November, 1935, and his estate was administered by the Public Trustee. After the usual payments had been made the sum of \$294.39, as unclaimed balance, was paid into the Treasury to the credit of his estate. His niece, Mary Agnes de Freitas, made claim to the amount and enquiries were made in Madeira as to whether there were any other heirs of Mr. John de Freitas. His Majesty's Consul at Funchal, Madeira, traced the whereabouts of five nephews of Mr. de Freitas and recommendations were made that Miss Agnes de Freitas and those five nephews who were living in Madeira should be paid the balance at credit of the estate.

Under the Public Trustee Ordinance, Chapter 245, the proviso to section 13 (3) provides that the Legislative Council may authorize the payment of any sum of money paid over to the Colonial Treasurer under the provisions of the Ordinance to anyone whom they may consider to have an equitable claim thereto. The Public Trustee considers the nephews of the deceased also have a claim to to this amount, and it is proposed in accordance with the motion that the sum should be divided as set out in the motion:—

- (a) to Mary Agnes de Freitas \$ 73.60
 (b) to the five nephews
 in Madeira 220.79
 to be divided equally among them less the expense of \$12.46, which was incurred in tracing their whereabouts.

As I have said, the proviso to Section 13 (3) of the Public Trustee Ordinance gives the Legislative Council power to authorize these payments, and I therefore recommend that this motion be accepted and the amounts be paid as stated.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion passed.

EX-L' CPL. I. A. FONTANELLE'S

REVISED PENSION AND GRATUITY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move.—

That, with reference to the Officer Administering the Government's Message No. 5 of the 2nd of August, 1914, this Council approves of the entire service of Ex-Lance-Corporal of Police No. 4094 Isaac A. Fontanelle being counted for pension and that he receive a revised pension and gratuity of \$169.30 and \$820, respectively.

The facts of this case are fully set out in Your Excellency's Message, No. 5, and very briefly they are that this Police Constable, Mr. Fontanelle, first joined the Police Force in 1913 and in 1915 volunteered for service with His Majesty's Forces in the last Great War. He left this Colony with the First Contingent and saw active service in Egypt where he was wounded. He returned to the Colony in 1919 and on account of his injuries could not then obtain readmission to the Police Force. However he obtained employment as a District Gunner in the old Artillery Company and served in that capacity for three years—from November, 1919,

to November, 1922. Thereafter he left the employment of Government and there was a break in his service with Government of three and a quarter years—from November, 1922, to February, 1926. But he was able to rejoin the Police Force in February, 1926, and finally retired from the Force in September, 1943.

What this motion seeks to do is to allow his pension and gratuity to be paid on the total of his service with Government—his total service in the Police Force and as District Gunner in the Artillery Company. The latter service was non-pensionable and therefore would not be included in the computation. But on this motion being passed he is entitled to a pension of \$114.86 and a gratuity of \$557.60. If this motion is accepted he would get a slightly higher pension of \$169.30 and a gratuity of \$820.00. In view of this constable's very excellent record and war service I trust the motion commends itself to the Council.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion passed.

MR. SEAUBALAK'S PERIOD OF SERVICE.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move—

That, with reference to the Officer Administering the Government's Message No. 8 of the 25th of August, 1944, this Council approves of the service of Mr. J. Seaubalak during the period 1911 to 1931 being treated as continuous with his present service commencing on 1st June, 1942, for the purpose of qualifying for a gratuity on retirement under the provisions of Legislative Council Resolution No. XXXV of the 21st of August, 1940.

Here again the facts are fully set out in Your Excellency's Message. The circumstances are somewhat similar to

the last motion with this exception: Mr. Seaubalak having served in various capacities in the Lands and Mines Department from 1911 to 1931—20 years—was eventually retrenched but he did not secure any form of superannuation whatever. He did petition Government but as there was no formal authority for granting him any benefit he got nothing. He has since been re-employed as Motorman and Captain of the Lands and Mines launch "Karani" from the 1st June, 1942. He has put forward his case and got more generous attention. It is recommended that we should treat his previous 20 years' service in the Department as continuous with his present service so that when he finally retires he will get superannuation benefits and the normal regulations benefits. I think the case is a very good one, and I am very glad we are now able to remedy what was a slightly ungenerous treatment in 1931.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion passed.

INCREASED ANNUAL ALLOWANCE TO
MR. G. H. DEY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move—

That, with reference to the Officer Administering the Government's Message No. 10 of the 6th of September, 1944, this Council approves of the grant to Mr. G. H. Dey, retired engineer, Customs Department, of an increased annual allowance of \$400 with effect from the 1st of June, 1944.

The facts are these: Mr. Dey was appointed to the post of Engineer in the Customs Department in 1910 at a salary of \$312 per annum. He served until the 31st of May, 1944 when he reached the age of 60 years and was retired. That is to say he served 34 years. When he retired his salary was

only \$600 per annum. It is unfortunate for Mr. Dey that his service age did not extend for a slightly longer period, because since his retirement it has been decided to regrade the salary of the post and in that regrading he would have been eligible to a salary of \$720 per annum whereby his post would have been pensionable. As it is, he retired before that was done with the result that he has only been able to secure an annual allowance of \$227.77. He has 34 years' service. He was very well reported on, and his work was not only in connection with the running of the launches but I understand he did very good work in connection with the maintenance cost. He was a capable engineer. Government would therefore like to do something better for him.

What is proposed is that he be granted a special annual allowance of \$400. Had he been pensionable with a salary of \$720 per annum his unreduced pension would have been \$410 per annum. What is proposed should be given now is an annual amount of \$400 as a retiring allowance. The difference, as one hon. Member pointed out, is not very great. In view of his excellent record I trust this Council will accept the motion.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1943.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move—

That, this Council approves the Statement of Supplementary Expenditure which has occurred during the year 1943, and which has not been included in any previous schedule for the year 1943 and is to be admitted as a charge to public funds under Colonial Regulation 265 (2), which has been laid on the table.

This final schedule for 1943, as stated in the terms of the motion, has to be admitted but, as hon. Members know, having been approved in Finance Committee His Excellency has authorized its admission into the accounts and those accounts have been closed and already presented in the form of a Treasury Report Abstract Account for the year. Therefore to some extent this is merely a formal motion, but I will take the opportunity now of explaining something that I said in Finance Committee two meetings ago when some Member suggested that the arrangement of the procedure of discussing schedules monthly in Finance Committee somewhat limited their scope in this Council when the quarterly schedule was presented. As I explained, that procedure of going to Finance Committee once a month is very valuable to Government as it enables items of excessive expenditure to come forward regularly, early and promptly and thus enable Government to get some information from Members as to whether the excess should be properly allowed by Government and having been so allowed the Governor feels competent and able to authorize that excessive expenditure without any fear that subsequently when the quarterly schedule is placed before the Council any particular item would be thrown out. That procedure does not in any way limit the right of Members to speak on these quarterly schedule motions. What, I think, is expected of Members is that they will not delete any item but will confine their remarks in the debate on these quarterly motions to matters of policy and matters of principle.

This particular schedule is the final one for 1943. It covers a number of items in respect of expenditure incurred during 1943 unexpectedly and inevitably that related to charges brought forward the previous year. The largest item is a refund of Income Tax, \$68,000, which is a matter of law. I do not propose to

move that the Council go into Committee. I feel that any remarks which hon. Members may make on departmental items may well be held over for the next item on the Order Paper, since all the Heads shown in this schedule will reappear in the schedule for the first quarter of the current year. I trust the motion will be accepted formally without going into Committee and that any remarks on departmental matters will be deferred until we reach the next item on the Order Paper. I therefore beg to move in the terms of the motion which I have read.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

Mr. JACOB: I quite agree in principle with what the hon. Mover has stated in regard to this motion but, as I have stated in Finance Committee, Members' scope is limited in the Committee and, what is more, there are no records of what is stated in Finance Committee. When I begin to reconsider the whole matter, it appears almost useless to say anything here too for the records take two to three years before they actually come out. Nevertheless I want to take this opportunity to refer to one item on page 3 of this Statement of Supplementary Expenditure which has occurred during the year 1943 and which has not been included in any previous schedule for the year 1943 and is to be admitted as a charge to public funds under Colonial Regulations 265 (2). The particular item I would like to refer to is under Head "Miscellaneous", item 32 "Passages, etc., Justice and Mrs. Stuart to and from British Guiana, \$3,175.98". I believe I did say something about this matter in the past, and I merely state it again here so that it can be noted by this Government, that so far as we are concerned, public men particularly, we are very concerned about the administration of justice in this Colony. More than that, we are concerned that the Judges should not be interfered with in any way either by Official or non-Official public men. I

am satisfied from what I know of the case, this Colony had to pay large sums of money. This gentleman, I think, was paid one and a half years' salary for doing practically no work. Other Officials had to act in this Colony and they had to be paid, and if the whole is totalled up it would not be less than \$10,000 spent in what I call undue official interference, influenced by public men in high social standing, with the administration of justice in this Colony. It is well that all members of the community should know that. We had a discussion here about increasing the salary of the Chief Justice though it is called a personal allowance. The idea of every citizen is that when a man is placed in a high judicial position as that of a Judge there should be no interference whatever, but I am sorry to say that the then Officer Administering the Government, while this Judge was actually forced to leave this Colony, is greatly responsible for this waste of money. The Judge left here and special provision was made for him. Maybe those in authority thought he would have been removed from the Public Service of the Crown, but he is now a Judge in another Colony. I am rather surprised that an Official of this Government should have acted in the manner he did then. I make these remarks so that they should remain on record and others who come in the future may see them and form their own opinion as to whether I am justified in speaking on this matter. Over \$10,000 of the taxpayers' money was wasted on account of undue interference with the administration of justice.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I had no intention of speaking on this motion. Unless I misunderstood the hon. Mover of the motion, I rather think he is trying to introduce a new principle in the Council today. Because of that I have risen to make a few remarks on this question. If I am wrong I would like to be corrected, as I would not like it to go on record that my understanding of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer's remarks is that they were correct. These items of

expenditure had been approved and passed in Finance Committee and as a result His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government has issued a warrant, and so the best thing to do will be to allow the motion to pass without going into Committee. I have no objection about that, but my objection is that it would certainly come with very bad grace for Members in Finance Committee to approve of an expenditure and the Governor in turn to issue the warrant and then the Council should delete the item. The point I wish to make is this: The power finally rests with this Council to approve or disapprove of any item that is stated in this Statement of Expenditure. If he agrees with me on that point there is nothing more I would like to say on it. But as I say, I rather understood him to say that because it is passed in Finance Committee and the Governor has issued the warrant and the money paid out, there is nothing more to be done about it and so let us approve of it at once. I do not think that is a principle we can allow in this Council. Let us approve of the motion as it stands, but do not let it go on record that because of action by the Finance Committee the Treasurer should, as it were, get away with it and there should be no question about moving the deletion of any item. I reserve the right as a Member of the Council at any time to move the deletion of any item passed in Finance Committee and more-so if I was not present in Finance Committee. I want to reserve the right when I get here not only to speak on it but to move the deletion if it is necessary. If that point is clear then I have nothing more to say.

The PRESIDENT: I think the point made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara and the hon. Member for North-Western District is perfectly clear. Sir Gordon Lethem's idea is that he will not sign a warrant without getting the assent of the Legislative Council. You cannot always get such assent formally in a full meeting of the Council, and so Sir Gordon and the hon. the Colonial Treasurer hope that hon.

Members will all subscribe to the arrangement by which the Council's views can be sounded out informally in Finance Committee. If only a few Members turn up and the item is important, the Colonial Treasurer who presides very often or the Governor himself will not proceed with it. If there is a good quorum present and there is no shadow of doubt of their agreeing with the expenditure, the Governor will sign the warrant and will expect the Council to ratify it later.

But I can see the point raised by the hon. Member for Central Demerara and the hon. Member for North-Western District. When the items come up for ratification that is the opportunity for Members to speak on policy and have their views on the matter recorded. We do hope that if an item has been approved informally in Finance Committee by a substantial quorum the Governor can sign the warrant with the confidence that it will not be rejected at a later date.

Mr. EDUN: I have listened carefully but I am not convinced that the Finance Committee will serve any useful purpose at all. So far as I am concerned I consider it to be a constitutional anomaly. What should be done is this: The Executive Council should take the responsibility of initiating expenditure and bringing the items of expenditure in this Council for approval. That is the constitutional procedure. I thought at the beginning that the Finance Committee would have served a certain useful purpose, but I look askance at it. It will create in due course a very complicated constitutional issue, and I am afraid of that. I think, constituted as we are and with the Executive Council in power you have all the responsibilities of incurring expenditure and coming here and getting those items of expenditure approved. Apart from that, I hardly think I will be able to serve on the Finance Committee with justification. I see no useful purpose in it, and I see danger in its functioning. I repeat it is a constitutional anomaly and should not be continued.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion passed.

SCHEDULE OF ADDITIONAL PROVISION -
APRIL—JUNE, 1944.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move:—

THAT, this Council approves the Schedule of Additional Provision for the quarter 1st April to 30th June, 1944 required to meet expenditure in excess of the provision made in the estimates for the year 1944, which has been laid on the table.

I suggest that the Council resolve itself into Committee, and that in considering the items in detail the main Heads might be called so as to give Members an opportunity to speak under a particular Head rather than on an independent subject.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE.

AGRICULTURE.

Item 1 (13) — Rice Officer, \$480.

Mr. JACOB: This is something new. I may have attended the Finance Committee, but I do not remember seeing this item. I see a note against it which says:—

"The Agriculture and Fisheries Advisory Committee has recommended that the post of Rice Officer on the scale \$2,160 x \$120 — \$2,880 should be substituted for that of Assistant Plant Breeder appearing in the Annual Estimates."

I wonder why it is proposed to change the more appropriate term "Assistant Plant Breeder" to that of "Rice Officer." I think it is a step in the wrong direction. At some later date the Head of the Department may say that the Rice Officer should look after nothing but rice. Lower down I notice provision for a Cane Farming Officer, and then we have a Plant Breeder. I do not know what he looks after, but the Sugar Producers' Association contributes towards his salary. We have all these different terms in plant breeding. I understood that the

modern trend was co-operation and collaboration, but in British Guiana we want to have separate officers as Plant Breeder, Rice Officer, and Cane Farming Officer. What about the breeding of other plants? I know that in my constituency everything has gone to ruin. We are not to think about coffee any more; we are to import coffee. I see some Members are grinning. I am here to represent my constituency and I am here primarily to see that that part of the country makes progress, but I am sorry to say that my constituency is not improving at all. Perhaps I will be blamed for that.

I am surprised to find that Government has changed the more comprehensive term of Assistant Plant Breeder for that of Rice Officer, and as far as I can see no provision has been made for the breeding of other plants. There seems to be something definitely wrong about it. It was said at one time that my constituency was the best place in the country for citrus cultivation, but everything has gone. Coffee has gone and there are hardly any ground provisions. We are making no progress forward but backwards.

As regards rice, in spite of what any hon. Member might say or the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board and Government might say, we are making absolutely no progress as compared with six or seven years ago. I hope the Rice Officer will improve conditions. What I want to see is the production of sugar increased by 100 per cent., and rice too. In fact I would like to see rice increased 200 per cent., and the reason is that the consumption of rice is double that of sugar in these parts. In this Colony and in the West Indies the consumption of rice is more than double that of sugar, and there are markets that are simply languishing for Demerara rice. We are unable to supply Trinidad alone with all its requirements, and while the Rice Marketing Board and its officers may say that we have sufficient rice to supply all the West

Indies, and that we want to produce 16,000 or 17,000 tons annually, I say that those figures are put down with the definite object of keeping the rice industry down. We want to produce 100,000 tons more rice. When the Burma rice and Cuba's sugar come in we will look after that aspect of the matter. Government is making a serious mistake in dividing up the duties of these officers, and I hope that will be changed very quickly. I will speak on cane farming a little later.

The CHAIRMAN: Won't you go on to deal with cane farming at the same time?

Mr. JACOB: I do not like this idea of dealing with the Schedule head by head. We should take it item by item. That has been the practice, but I notice that recently the idea is to take a whole head. I would much prefer to deal with each item separately, but if it is the wish of the Council I will deal now with cane farming. I see against the item "Cane Farming Officer" a note which says:—

"To provide for the salary of a Cane Farming Officer to be appointed to instruct the farmers in the best methods of cultivation, flood-fallowing, etc., as recommended by the Cane Farming Committee. The post would be on the Unfixed Establishment for a period of 3 years."

It looks very nicely on paper but the remarks are in my opinion very academic. We have in this Colony various obstacles to the proper carrying out of most agricultural projects. Government proposes to provide a Cane Farming Officer to instruct the farmers in the best methods of cultivation, flood-fallowing, etc. I have no doubt that it can get a suitable officer to instruct in the best methods of cultivation, but as regards flood-fallowing I do not know whether any officer, or for that matter the Government, can instruct the farmers properly as regards water difficulties throughout the Colony. I think it is beyond the capacity of this Government to do that. Government has failed completely and will continue to fail so long as it has on Committees

and Boards the people who compose them at the present time.

Let us take a practical look into the matter. The largest cane-farming areas are Beterverwagting-Triumph and Buxton-Friendship. The smaller ones are Plaisance-Spendaam, and Rosehall Village, Corentyne. I claim to be very familiar with the methods on the East Coast of Demerara, and particularly the methods at Buxton-Friendship. I was born there and I have been through the village from the seashore to the savannah. I know what I am talking about. It is not practicable under existing conditions for any officer to instruct the farmers how to do flood-fallowing, except this Government is in a position to supply water when the farmers want it, and remove it when they do not want it on their lands. It cannot be done in the villages at all, and if by this appointment Government desires to confuse the whole issue and ruin cane farming then it is taking a step in the right direction. I see the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) laughing. Maybe he knows better than I do; it is in his constituency. Maybe he has the support of the Cane Farming Committee, but I am sorry to say that that Committee is worth nothing. The members are all hand-picked; they are not the choice of the farmers. They may be the choice of the District Commissioner and the Member for the Division, but they are certainly not the choice of the farmers. Of course the District Commissioner and the Commissioner of Local Government have a certain amount of influence on those people and manipulate and manoeuvre things to suit the few. The result is that cane farming has gone down and will go down more in the future, perhaps with the idea of impressing the Imperial Government that Government, is taking steps to double or treble production by cane farmers, and has taken steps to appoint a Cane Farming Officer.

Perhaps some of my friends are thinking that I am speaking in a strain against the sugar industry. I

want to say right away that is not so. I should certainly like to see cane farmers produce 40 or 50 per cent. of the total amount of sugar produced in this Colony, as is the case in Trinidad. At one time I think the production of cane farmers' sugar in Trinidad was more than 50 per cent.—perhaps 60 per cent. of the total production of sugar in that island. I do not know what the position is at the present time. From Press reports I notice that the cane farming industry is almost ruined. The farmers will not plant; they have turned their attention to other methods of living, probably due to the naval and air bases constructed in the island. I just want to make the point that in Trinidad the cane farmers produced a very large percentage of the island's sugar production, but in this Colony I do not think our cane farmers produced 5,000 tons of the total production of 100,000 tons of sugar in 1942.

Government has been led into the appointment of a Cane Farming Officer to throw dust into the eyes of the public. I have absolutely no doubt that if there is a change of policy the production of sugar by cane farmers is not going to increase during the next few years. I would certainly like to see the production of sugar maintained. In fact I have no objection to production being increased, but I would certainly like to see cane farmers producing a very large percentage of the total production of sugar. More than that, I would like to see cane farmers being given land on all organized sugar plantations to plant cane, so that they could contribute to the production of sugar to a greater extent. Why don't the sugar estates encourage the cane farmers to plant cane on their lands? They definitely will not. Large areas of land on the East Coast of Demerara are in a constant state of abandonment. Those lands could be properly flood-fallowed because there is no mixed cultivation; it is all sugar cane. If Government proposes to do flood-fallowing in the villages where there are mixed cultivations—ground provisions and permanent crops—it will certainly not succeed.

Perhaps it will succeed in cultivations of 10 or 50 acres, but the expense will not warrant it, and I am doubtful whether the water will be got on the land in time and taken off in time. The whole thing is going to be a failure. I will be sorry because it would be a waste of time and money, but maybe that is what some people are hoping and planning for. We are wasting time and I certainly do not agree that the cane farmers will benefit by these methods. The sooner Government changes its methods the better for cane farming and the sugar industry.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I am under the impression that the two points raised by the hon. Member were fully explained in Finance Committee, but the hon. Member was either not present on that occasion or he has taken the opportunity today to ventilate his views on these two subjects merely for the purpose of placing them on record. I considered it prudent at this stage to offer some explanation of those two points for the benefit of those Members who were not in Finance Committee.

Dealing first with the question of the Rice Officer hon. Members will recall that on the estimates of the Department of Agriculture there is an item "Sugar Agronomist and Plant Breeder," and another item "Asst. Plant Breeder." We all know that the Sugar Agronomist and Plant Breeder was an officer whose main activities were in connection with the sugar cane, and that the officer charged with the duties of Asst. Plant Breeder was connected with rice. It does not necessarily follow that the Asst. Plant Breeder will devote all his attention to rice and not sugar, or that the Sugar Agronomist should devote all his attention to sugar and not rice. They will work together and assist each other.

What occurred is this: A vacancy higher up the line arose and it was felt that the Assistant Plant Breeder could not hold his post any longer. I am sure the hon. Member will agree that the Department was quite right in recommending that the officer

who held the post of Assistant Plant Breeder should be promoted to the post of Agricultural Superintendent. He was detailed for duty in the Essequibo district. He was there for some time, but when this large amount of work began in connection with the development of the rice industry it was felt that rice should receive a greater amount of attention, and the only officer in the Department who could have carried out those duties was the officer who had been promoted to the post of Agricultural Superintendent. It is quite clear that he could not be brought back as Asst. Plant Breeder, and what is more, Government could not reduce his pay because he had already received promotion. Therefore the only thing to do was to create the post of Rice Officer and fix the salary of that post on the same scale as that of an Agricultural Superintendent. That is how it came about that this post was created—in order to transfer back the officer who had received promotion to perform his duties as Rice Officer. A great deal more perhaps is expected than what I have said, but it is perhaps too early for me to make any comments on that score, and hon. Members will be satisfied with the explanation I have given.

With regard to the Cane Farming Officer I think the explanation in the Remarks column fully covers what should be said on that subject, but on this occasion I am quite in agreement with what the hon. Member has said, and he will be very pleased to know that he is not alone in that position. There are others, and it is hoped that action along the lines he has mentioned will be taken, but it will take time. There can be no doubt that the cane farming industry is considered important, and I think there is certainly one Government Official in this Chamber (I do not think it is necessary for me to point him out) who is very anxious to see that the cane farming industry develops. As a matter of fact it is one of his babies, and so far as

village areas are concerned it is a boon to the villagers. It helps them to pay their rates, and as far as he is concerned he will do all he can to see that the industry comes on. There can be no doubt that within recent times the industry has suffered severe set-backs. The position is that Government appointed a Committee, but I do not think that is the Committee the hon. Member referred to.

I may mention in passing that the Committee he referred to was not hand-picked at all, and I do not think he will contradict the statement that the members of this Committee were not hand-picked either by the Commissioner or myself. I will tell him that I have had nothing to do with the Committee, and I am not on it myself. The members of the Committee represent the associations in the district, and surely the hon. Member will agree that if two representatives of villages on that Committee suggest that they were hand-picked by the District Commissioner or somebody else they are really confusing the issue, to use the hon. Member's own words. Those two Members, whom I know very well, are responsible members of associations in the district, and I have no doubt, knowing the associations they represent, that before they accepted nomination they had either to be selected by their associations or at any rate to obtain their approval.

There is no doubt that the industry has had very severe set-backs. At the same time there was, at one time at least, some difference of opinion as to what should be done in order to improve it. There is one school which thinks that merely by doling out fertilizers to the cane farmers would help the industry. I am very pleased to note that the hon. Member does not advocate that. There are others who think the same way as the hon. Member has just mentioned.

The Cane Farming Officer was selected from the Department of Agriculture as a result of his particular

experience in that line, and his duties, as I understand them, are to place his experience at the disposal of our cane farming communities wherever they may be. There are proposals now which will be submitted to Government very shortly, I think, whereby certain assistance, apart from advice from the Cane Farming Officer, should be rendered the industry, and that is where I agree with the hon. Member. The proposals include the question of the supply of water for irrigation, flood-fallowing and things of that kind. It is hoped that if those proposals are accepted—and I hope they will be—the cane farmers will receive a great deal of assistance which will be of great and lasting benefit. I hope the hon. Member will assist me when the time comes in an endeavour to get the people of Buxton to continue with the maintenance of those works after they have been carried out. I do not agree with him that flood-fallowing cannot be done satisfactorily in village areas. I felt like the hon. Member at one time but I erred, and I think the hon. Member is erring the same way. What he probably has in mind is that the cultivation in those village areas is mixed.

It is obvious that flood-fallowing cannot be done successfully in an area like that, but it is hoped that as a result of the decline of the industry it will be possible now to divide those areas into much larger areas than was possible say four or five years ago. In that way I am advised, and in fact I believe from my knowledge of it, flood-fallowing in these areas will be successful. I appeal to the hon. Member and other Members of the Council that the omission of a Cane Farming Officer in this Department will be the very worst step to take. Cane farming is very important to the villagers of the East Coast Demerara in particular and, as far as I can make out, it seems that the Officer will have quite a day's work all the time. We want to see the industry maintained and that economically and beneficially to the people who are engaged in that occupation. With this

explanation I trust the hon. Member will feel that Government is trying to do something in this matter and will give it his support.

Mr. EDUN: I did not want to speak because I felt that this provision for a Cane Farming Officer is a necessity, but when it comes to flood fallowing I feel afraid about it, seeing that it will be conducive ultimately to Malaria especially around the villages. With your pronouncement in Council at the last meeting, sir, regarding DDT as a deterrent to mosquito-breeding, I think that aspect of it will be obviated. I think flood fallowing as a measure for more yield may be all right in a sense, but so far as health is concerned flood fallowing must be watched very carefully in the villages because it will be the creation of health hazards in populated areas. That is the point I wish to stress. I was thinking more or less of fertilizers, whether that will not be better than flood fallowing, but experience has shown that flood fallowing is the better method of getting more yield. But we must not overlook the health hazards.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member can be well assured that the Medical Department and the Malaria Specialist have very much in mind the point he has made.

Mr. deAGUIAR: Arising out of the point made by the hon. Member, he has raised a very important point indeed and that is one of the things exercising my mind. The idea, however, is not only to keep water on the land but to take it off as well. Some of the money will be spent to ensure that the water goes off the land at the right time and be on the land at the right time.

Mr. JACOB: I have not been able to follow the speech by the hon. Nominated Member at all. However the plain fact remains that by flood fallowing on the sugar estates the sugar industry, which was threatened with ruin at one time, is

definitely on its legs now. At one time the sugar industry only produced two tons of sugar per acre, and that was considered very good, but with improvements in other parts of the world and flood fallowing in British Guiana the industry produces something like four tons per acre. Unless that is achieved you are doing nothing on a sugar estate. The question of health hazards, as the hon. Member puts it, I do not understand. It is beyond me. I was a little surprised to hear the hon. Member for Central Demerara speaking as he did. If he says that the remarks I have made have a good deal of merit, I am wondering how then the Executive Government is continuing with the present method. I cannot follow it. In fact I have said you are doing nothing merely by appointing a Cane Farming Officer, or for that matter a Rice Officer. You want something more than that. During the last year or so, I have been much disturbed about all these new appointments. I am wondering if these officers are doing what is expected of them. I hope the Chairman of the Advisory Committee will assist the Cane Farming Officer. It is an excellent thing, but you cannot make bricks without straw. There is difficulty. You cannot get water for flood fallowing; you cannot get improvements in the villages to accommodate this new scheme. What has surprised me most is the statement of the hon. Member for Central Demerara about the decline of the sugar industry, that it will be better now to divide the areas under sugar cane into blocks so that flood fallowing can be done to better advantage.

Mr. deAGUIAR: The hon. Member has not the point right. I said, owing to the decline in the canefarming industry it is now more favourable to subdivide the area into blocks in order to assist flood fallowing.

Mr. JACOB: That is where I disagree with him entirely. I say the decline in the sugar industry is not so material a matter at the present time.

The CHAIRMAN: Excuse me! It is the cane farming industry we are discussing.

Mr. JACOB: I mean the sugar industry in the villages. The decline of cane farming in the villages. Flood fallowing is not going to help the case of the decline of cane farming in the villages. There the lands are planted with other crops. Particularly at Buxton, Beterverwagting-Triumph, on the East Coast Demerara, most of the lands have a good deal of fruit trees and other permanent crops. If you are going to kill out all those permanent crops in certain blocks so as to flood fallow those blocks for cane farming, you would succeed. But I am saying that the villages are not the best places at the present time for flood fallowing. Owing to the decline of the cane farming industry in the villages those lands are certainly not in an abandoned state now. The people have been gradually reducing their cane farming and putting in other crops. I would ask my hon. friend to go into the matter more carefully. I have had definite opinion by residents in the villages, by people who have worked in those villages as philosophers and who know the villages, who have told me and have confirmed my own view knowing the conditions as I do, that you are not going to succeed with your present method. Which of the methods do you purpose to adopt to encourage flood fallowing in the villages so as to encourage increased cane farming activities there?

I think some useful purpose has been served by bringing up the matter. I hope Government will watch it. If it is intended to increase the production of sugar in the villages and Government believes this method will do so, then Government has my support. If you are going to reduce the quantity of sugar the cane farmers produce and still say you are succeeding—that I know is Government's attitude recently, while reducing you say you are reducing to consolidate; that is what was done in

the rice industry, you have reduced the production, you have reduced everything but still say you are doing well—that would not do. I want to see the sugar industry improved in this Colony. The production is approximately 200,000 tons. Let it be 300,000 tons. I have no objection to that, but do not increase one industry at the expense of several others. You have no other industry going on now. I do not know who is going to reply to the duties of a Plant Bleeder. I must say I am not impressed by the statement of the hon. Member for Central Demerara, who is the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. If you want to improve the status of this very excellent officer—I am not going to question his ability—why Government does not make him Deputy Sugar Agronomist or Deputy Plant Breeder. Do not say you are going to call him Rice Officer and then come forward and call for a Cane Farming Officer, and then have a Sugar Agronomist carrying the title of Sugar Agronomist and Plant Breeder to remain and the Assistant Plant Breeder to be changed to Rice Officer. I am sure the Sugar Agronomist and Plant Breeder requires an assistant. I want to impress on this Government finally that you have to bear in mind that this Colony is not to be dependent on sugar and rice alone. We want other crops. We had them in the past and we must encourage them if this Colony is to become self-supporting.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I think the subject has been very well ventilated. The hon. Member for Central Demerara has satisfactorily answered from the point of view of Government those criticisms made by the hon. Member for North-Western District, but there is the point he mentioned about the designation of the post of Rice Officer. I do not think I am disclosing any State secret when I say, the hon. Member is not alone in his opinion as to what the proper designation of that post should be. Everybody knows this particular officer was termed previously Assistant Plant Bleeder but

he specialised in the breeding of rice. His primary object in the Department was to work on rice production. When the time came for increasing his salary scale various suggestions were put forward. I myself suggested he should be termed Rice Agronomist, but the Director of Agriculture for technical reasons objected to that as being too limited in its scope and put Rice Officer. As I said, it is a technical matter and one of opinion. The point made by the hon. Member is quite a good one, and I think we may look into it again and see whether there can be some change made or not. I know the Director of Agriculture is firmly of the opinion that Rice Officer is the correct title. I think we can leave it at that.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

Mr. JACOB: Under this Head may I enquire when increased accommodation will be afforded and to what extent? I understand two small buildings have been erected.

The CHAIRMAN: Two large buildings!

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: To accommodate at least sixty (60) pupils.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I feel sure, if the hon. Member visits the racecourse or the cricket ground at Bourda and passes by the College he would see them, as most of us have.

Mr. JACOB: I have seen them and wondered whether there will be increased accommodation and whether there will be proper supervision of those buildings. As a matter of fact a good many people suggest that the lower flat of Queen's College main building can be made more useful by adding wings. I am a little

surprised that two small separate buildings have been erected, as there will not be proper supervision by the staff.

BISHOPS' HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

Mr. ROTH: I would like to take this opportunity to draw Government's attention to the urgent necessity for the establishment of a Kindergarten School in connection with this School. I understand there is not a proper Kindergarten School in the whole City to-day. That is a matter of regret to many parents, I am told. I think Government or the Education Department should take into consideration the possibility of establishing a first class Kindergarten School at Bishops' High School.

The CHAIRMAN: The Board of Governors have the question under consideration, but have not submitted their decision to Government as yet.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: That is so!

Mr. JACOB: Frankly I do not think a secondary school should do Kindergarten work. That is a matter for private enterprise if not for the primary schools. Definitely the Bishops' High School is a secondary school, and you cannot have a secondary school with a separate department for small children. I do not think it would be the best thing. That is my own personal view, and I give it out for what it is worth so that hon. Members may understand.

LAW OFFICERS.

Mr. GONSALVES: I would like to ask a few questions under this Head, and the hon. the Attorney-General may be able to help me. In view of the appointment of a Legal Draftsman is there any relief of the congestion of legislative drafting in this Department? There was congestion of work there, and legislation could not get a move on

in proper order or as quickly as possible. There is now a Legal Draftsman, and I would like to know if there has been any improvement in that direction since the appointment. My second question is with regard to the appointment of a Solicitor-General. In the old days when we had a Solicitor-General he and the Attorney-General prosecuted at the Criminal Sessions. Now we have got a Solicitor-General, a Crown Counsel and the Attorney-General and we still find ourselves employing or engaging two private practitioners to prosecute for the Crown at the Assizes. If the Solicitor-General is being used in connection with the drafting of legislation, then of course relief of the congestion I have just hinted should be more greatly so. I observe at this Criminal Session two private practitioners are prosecuting for the Crown, and yet we have a Solicitor-General and a Crown Counsel. The latter, I understand is on leave. He certainly deserves a holiday, although one may say, having regard to the fact that the Senior King's Counsel engaged in the same matter as he did not think it necessary to have a holiday after the trial, that it is rather strange the Crown Counsel who is a much younger man should find it necessary to have a holiday. He is, however, entitled to it and must have it. Those are the two points the hon. the Attorney-General may help us on.

I see further there is provision for the purchase of new furniture. I do not know if that means personal furniture to be used at the Legal Draftsman's house or office. It is not quite clear whether his office is to be provided with furniture as well.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In reply to the hon. Member's opinion as to the Crown Counsel being a younger man, I may state there were three King's Counsel in the case on the other side and only that Officer on the side of the Crown, but I do not think that greatly worried him. Although he had been a

Magistrate for some years and had been appointed Crown Counsel for five years, he never had leave since he has been in the Government Service. Four times his leave has been overdue, and as there are no other officers who have not had leave for some time someone of us had to take leave first as we could not all go together, and he did so.

The hon. Member asked whether since the appointment of a Legal Draftsman the congestion of work in the Department has been relieved. The answer is "No, it is worse". As long as things go on as at present the congestion will continue. I would like to state that at the Conference I attended in Trinidad I met the Law Officers of all the West Indian Islands, and you will be astonished to know the staff they have to deal with these matters. They have precisely the same work as we have here, but they have a vastly larger staff. Jamaica has in the Law Officers Department a 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Assistant Officer and stenographers totalling more than the staff. Trinidad has two Crown Counsel, two Assistant Law Officers and two Assistant Crown Solicitors and a number of clerks. In our office we have an Attorney-General, a Solicitor-General, a Crown Counsel, and a Legal Draftsman with two stenographers—the Attorney-General's Clerk and a typist. We have additional work arising out of the war, the Social Welfare and Development Schemes, the Air Bases, the change of the Constitution; all these mean a vast amount of work for the Department. Anyone can count the pages of legislation which passed through this Chamber in the last five years. Look at the supplementary legislation and work it out for yourselves. As much has gone through during those five years as in the previous twenty years since the last war.

The Legal Draftsman is now doing his work, but there is such a vast amount of arrears of work that we know

that if everybody did nothing but drafting it would not be straightened out for several months to come. There are many reasons for that. I do not wish to waste hon. Members' time, but one reason for that is that my own time is very largely taken up with meetings and conferences. Three afternoons a week I have meetings which practically take up the whole of my time as compared with pre-war days. The hon. Member mentioned about two private practitioners prosecuting for the Crown. The answer is "Yes; the Crown Counsel is on leave and the Solicitor-General is preparing indictments for the Berbice and Essequibo Sessions which will be opening next week. That I can do myself but I am working on constitutional matters and have not the time." I am afraid hon. Members, who happen not to be there to appreciate the immense increase of work, will not understand that particularly in the chambers of the Law Officers of all the Colonies of the West Indies, British Guiana and Bermuda it is out of all proportion with that of pre-war times. In this Colony it was the custom in pre-war days for the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General to prosecute in the Court at the Criminal Session, but that was most exceptional. That is not done elsewhere. It may be said that in England they do not have the Attorney-General appearing in Court, and if you look at the Blue Book you will see that \$45,000 is provided for private practitioners. In England every Department of Government has its Legal Adviser and the Attorney-General only deals with what is referred to him, but here he has to advise every Department of Government. The Competent Authorities form an extra department, and they all want immediate advice. It is quite impossible to satisfy them and also do the Court.

With regard to the furniture, as far as I know one desk, one big shelf and one chair are all the furniture in the Officer's chambers.

Mr. GONSALVES: I am glad that I asked the questions because I seemed to have pulled out the hon. the Attorney-General much more than I thought he would have said. The questions I have asked have been due to the number of queries one hears outside as a Member of the Legislative Council. Other Members have been asked at different times "Now you have got so many men in the Law Officers' Department, why you cannot get things done a little better?" What the hon. the Attorney-General has said, I think, would convince everyone that if only for some short period, whether a year or two years, further assistance is needed in that Department the Governor in Council should seriously consider whether or not further attention or improvement to the Department should not be immediately provided. If even it is correct to say it will take some time to get through the work there, no one expects the Attorney-General to do more than he can do. It is usually said that no one can do more than a day's work, though you may be inclined to offer him day and night work. I think if the position still is as has been represented, steps should be taken to have it further remedied.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO: There is no doubt that there is a considerable amount of work in the Law Officers' Department. I sometimes think that but for the little exercise the hon. the Attorney-General takes during the afternoons he would suffer from nightmare as the result of the amount of work in his office. What I do not like about it is that the Legal Draftsman, I am not sure, is comfortably housed. Where he is does not make for good work on his part, if he is put in a small partitioned part of that office in order to carry out his duties. I would like to see that Officer being placed in a proper building where he can extend himself and be more comfortable than he is.

The CHAIRMAN: The question, I think, is that many offices of Government are uncomfortably housed. We

have to discuss that in the future, and the point will be borne in mind. There is nowhere else for the Legal Draftsman to be housed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is a temporary arrangement.

The CHAIRMAN: It is certainly an unsatisfactory position.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Item 34—Audit of Trade Unions' Accounts, \$1,500.

Mr. EDUN: I wish to take this opportunity to thank Government for the assistance given to Trade Unions.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank you.

PUBLIC WORKS—EXTRAORDINARY.

Mr. JACOB: I am not going to say what my friends expect me to say. I am going to refer to a road which should have been constructed in the Demerara-Essequibo constituency. There is no road in the Government settlement at Hague leading from the public road to the school. The matter was taken up by the Trade Unions last year, and I think the year before too, and the Commissioner of Local Government stated that \$4,000 was provided in this year's estimates for the proper construction and metalling of the road. I think rice is being reaped in that district now. It is not practicable to do anything during the balance of this year. It is a thriving settlement of over 5,000 people who have been there many years living under adverse conditions—no roads, no water supply, insufficient lands to plant and to graze their cattle—and in spite of those difficulties they have stuck there and done very well indeed. After repeated representations they were promised a road. Maybe the excuse of the Public Works Department is that labour was not available, but

the people of the settlement could have provided all the labour and burnt earth required. For some reason or other Government just delayed and did absolutely nothing. It is most distressing, and I think it is time that the officers entrusted with these matters get about them.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the name of the settlement?

Mr. JACOB: Hague.

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask the Colonial Secretary to reply.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I agree entirely with the hon. Member that the people of Hague are industrious and hard-working, and that they have proved themselves very good settlers. A road is needed, and on representations made by the hon. Member we were able to obtain a vote from this Council for the building of that road. So far the road has not been constructed, and on the last occasion on which I asked for the reason I was told it was due to lack of material. I am just as disappointed as my hon. friend that the road has not been completed this year, and I do hope it will be possible to start at least in the near future.

The CHAIRMAN: I will get an explanation from the Director of Public Works for the next meeting.

Dr. SINGH: I made representation in the matter some years ago and the road was partly done. It remains in the same condition to-day and I hope Government will have it completed as early as possible.

Schedule agreed to.

The Council resumed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the motion be put.

Motion put, and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL INTEREST-FREE LOAN

TO H. M. GOVERNMENT.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move:—

THAT, with reference to the Officer Administering the Government's Message No. 7 of the 24th of August, 1944, this Council approves of an additional interest-free loan of \$1,000,000 being made to His Majesty's Government on the same conditions stated in Legislative Council Resolution No. X of 3rd June, 1943.

I think the Council will recall that when the question of an interest-free loan to His Majesty's Government was discussed both in Finance Committee and in the Legislative Council itself one or two Members urged that the amount should not be limited to one million dollars but might be increased to two millions. At that time Government could not give an assurance that that could be done. We were not yet certain as to what our financial commitments for 1943 would be, and while we accepted the suggestion it was held over for further consideration. Now that we know that our financial position justifies increasing the amount this resolution is brought for formal approval of the Council.

I do not think it is necessary for me to say more, because I believe the principle has been accepted by Members of the Council. Just to remind hon. Members I may state that the condition is that if the money is wanted in an emergency the Council has the right to apply for its return. That is not the normal condition of interest-free loans. The usual condition is that H. M. Government reserves the right to fix the time for repayment after the war. In the case of this Colony we were given the assurance that if the money was required in an emergency it could be asked for, I invite the attention of

the Council to paragraph 3 of the Message in which it is stated that the Secretary of State wishes it conveyed that H. M. Government appreciates the action of the Council. I formally move the motion.

M. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I do not wish to say very much except to throw out a suggestion again. I was very glad to see that it was found practicable to increase the loan to two million dollars, and I express the hope that we may be able to go a step further. It seems to me that a little bit of urging now and then bears some fruit. I have now risen to suggest that we may be able to increase it by another million dollars to three million dollars.

Mr. JACOB: I rise to support the motion. In fact I think I suggested when the first loan of a million dollars was proposed that it should have been two million dollars, and I am glad to see that my personal suggestion has been given effect to. (laughter). While that is so I was a bit surprised to be tackled by a large number of people who asked how this Legislature could have agreed to lend money without interest to the Imperial Government when Government has always stated that it had no money to do certain necessary productive and improvement works in this Colony? I think there is a good deal of justification for that question, and I speak to-day with that in view. No one objects to two or four million dollars being loaned to the Imperial Government free of interest on the distinct understanding that as soon as that money is required we should get it back. The money is lying idle at the present time and therefore the Imperial Government should be allowed to make use of it on the condition stated.

I wish to say a little more about this matter. Looking at the Draft Estimate for 1944 I find that our Public Debt charges are \$1,010,627, and the total estimated expenditure \$9,015,291 for 1944. Government has had the occasion to borrow money from the Banks and probably from other sources, paying interest on that money. I hope that if Government has cause to borrow money for the Rice Marketing Board or the Transport and Harbours Department, it will be borrowed from surplus colonial funds, and that the interest will be paid into the revenue of the Colony. We are paying one million dollars in interest annually on our Public Debt. In 1942 our total Public Debt was \$1,100,251, in 1943 it was \$1,026,411, and for 1944 it is estimated at \$1,010,627, and the interest on those charges is roughly \$90 between 1942 and 1944.

I have not had much time to study the Colonial Treasurer's note on the present and prospective financial position of the Colony which was published and circulated recently, but I promise to give it some thought. I was surprised, however, to see the suggestion in it that we should raise a loan. In raising a loan we would have to provide interest and sinking fund. At the present time the Colony has a surplus balance of over 7 million dollars and I would not be surprised if at the end of the year it is 8 millions in spite of what certain financial experts of the Government say, taking into account the other funds noted in the Treasurer's statement—the Development Trust Fund, which has at its credit about \$300,000, and the Immigration Fund, which stands at about half a million dollars. I hope that Government will do something to invest this money. I think the Imperial Government ought to take this money at a low rate of interest and return it when we want it. I think there is sufficient acumen in the

Executive Council to suggest such a course. I would be alarmed to think that while the Colony has a surplus of 8 million dollars it should raise a local loan. I stress local loan because the idea is to have more money lying idle and increase our burden.

The PRESIDENT: The Colonial Treasurer's memorandum is not on the Order Paper.

Mr. JACOB: We are lending this money to the Imperial Government free of interest, and it is appreciated by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Paragraph 3 of Your Excellency's Message states:—

"The Secretary of State has informed me that His Majesty's Government would gratefully accept the additional loan (if the Legislative Council approves) and has also requested that, in that event, he would wish me to convey to Council a formal expression of the appreciation of His Majesty's Government."

We have this money here and doing nothing with it, and I am thinking that arrangements ought to be made to lend it to H. M. Government at 2, 2½ or 3 per cent. so as to reduce the Public Debt charges of this Colony. I think every hon. Member will appreciate that representations were made to the Royal Commission that as the Colony was burdened with Public Debt charges, and particularly certain charges which were of no benefit to the Colony (sea defences and such things) those debts should be wiped out, or at least that interest should not be paid in respect of them. If we are burdened to the extent of one million dollars annually I think it would be a very fine gesture from H.M. Government, seeing that it is borrowing money at certain rates of interest, if it would accept this money which is lying idle in the Colony. I think an offer should be made to lend £1,000,000 to H. M. Government at a low rate of interest in order to augment the funds of the Colony. I agree that the Treasurer's Note does not come

within the scope of this motion, but it is a matter of very great importance to the Colony and every Member should think about it and decide at some later date whether it would be wise to raise a loan and pay interest on it while we have a large sum of money lying idle. I throw out the suggestion and invite the Executive Council to give it very careful consideration.

Mr. EDUN: I support the motion wholeheartedly. I consider it to be a gesture of goodwill between ourselves and the Mother Country. When we consider the huge war expenditure of the Imperial Government (£13,000,000 per day), what is a million dollars? I am of the opinion that we should go further and make our token larger. Let us inflate our economic sense of proportion a little higher by offering 5 million dollars as a gesture of goodwill towards the Imperial Government from a happy and contented people. ("Hear, hear.") I would support the suggestion of a further loan of two million dollars made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar).

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am afraid that the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) has not been quite lucid in his speech because I think Members will agree with me when I say that I am not quite sure about what he was recommending.— Whether he was recommending that two million dollars, which we propose to lend interest free, should be subject to interest, or whether he was recommending that we find some more money and lend that at interest in addition to the interest-free loan. In the course of his remarks he added two million dollars to our surplus. If he thinks that we have a lot of money in addition to this two million dollars and we should make arrangements to lend it to the Imperial Government I have to tell him that that is not the case. The reason why we did not come forward with that money is because we

did not have money lying idle. It is true, as I have said in my Note, the Colony's surplus is six million dollars, but all of it is not lying idle. We have about half a million dollars in investments, one million has already gone to the United Kingdom and another million is now proposed to be sent. We have to finance the Commodity Control transactions to the extent of over a million dollars, but that could be done by Bank overdraft. In addition there are large sums which Government has to keep in suspense to finance the Transport services and certain military operations, and also keep money in London. Therefore we must not imagine that there is a large sum of money in addition to these two million dollars from which we can draw. That is not so at all. I do not think the remarks of the hon. Member were quite apposite.

The hon. Member touched on my Note. As you said, sir, that is not under discussion now. It was prepared for a particular purpose, and if it is decided to take any action the matter will be put before the Council.

The hon. Member referred to the Public Debt of the Colony and I think he was going to suggest that we should use our funds to pay off that Public Debt. That was the suggestion he made on a previous occasion.

Mr. JACOB: I think I know a little bit better than that. You cannot pay off money borrowed under specific conditions.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That was the answer I gave the hon. Member when he made that suggestion. (laughter).

Motion put, and agreed to.

GUARANTEED MINIMUM PRICES TO FARMERS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Sir, I beg to move:—

THAT, with reference to the Officer Administering the Government's Message No. 9 of the 30th August, 1944, this Council concurs in principle with the recommendations made by the ad hoc Government Produce and Marketing Scheme Committee with the full support of the Legislative Council Food Production Committee, that prices in keeping with those now being paid for good quality produce delivered to the Government Produce Depot should be maintained for the next twelve months, and that the existing Government guaranteed minimum prices, to ensure the farmer against loss in case of glut, should be continued for the next three years, as set out in the Schedule to the Message.

My hon. friend, the Member for Central Demerara, who is Chairman of the ad hoc Committee, is very anxious to speak on the motion and to explain. Therefore all I need say is that the intention is to record this Council's approval of the policy which is being followed by Government with the approval of that organization to which I have referred, and of the Legislative Council Food Production Committee—the policy of maintaining existing price schedules for ground provisions and of maintaining a guaranteed minimum price to farmers for three years. Those prices are set out in the Schedule and I need not refer to them in detail. The object is quite clear and, as I said, I am relying on the Chairman of the Organisation to give any further explanation that may be necessary. I beg to move the motion.

Mr. de AGUIAR: In seconding this motion perhaps it would be useful if I explain what the actual position is. This motion seeks to obtain the approval of the Council to the suggestion that was put up by the ad hoc Marketing Committee which involved a financial loss of about \$50,000 as a result of Government guaranteeing to farmers a minimum price for their produce. As it is stated in the Message, it will be seen that the main object behind this proposal is that reasonably good prices should be guaranteed to the farmers for their produce for a period of one year. The Message therefore goes further and seeks to obtain

the approval of the Council in principle that the present Government guaranteed prices should be carried on for a period of three years.

Dealing with the first part of the motion, as will be seen it is estimated that in order to maintain the present reasonably good prices that are being paid to farmers the actual financial loss in the working of the Depot up to the end of June next year will amount to \$50,000. But I would like to explain that when those figures were first made out certain calculations were made on the quantity of produce that may be expected to come in from the farmers, but as the result of the Grow More Food Drive which was instituted by His Excellency the Governor the quantity of produce that has come in to the Depot is far more than was expected at any time even before those calculations were made. I mention that because it may be found that the figure of \$50,000 may be exceeded. I hope, however, that will not be the case. I think it is well that I should outline the position to hon. Members so that they would know what the position would be when the time comes. At the present moment, as far as I hear from everyone around, it is most gratifying to the farmers. They have got guaranteed prices for the produce they cultivate, and they know when they deliver good quality produce the Depot will take them and pay the guaranteed price against that particular produce. The farmers, I have spoken to, all express their appreciation not only of the good prices, as some of them put it, that they now receive for their produce but the guarantee behind them. In the past what used to happen was this: If a man cultivated a large area of land either by his own individual effort or by engaging labour to do so, he ran a risk when reaping-time came to market that produce at the best price. It naturally followed that if the market was glutted he had to sacrifice his produce. That is not the case today. The farmers are in the happy position today of only having to see that their produce reach

the Depot and receive the prices guaranteed by the Marketing Organization for them. They are also freed from the agencies' commissions which they paid in the past and also from quite a number of other difficulties in the way of the poor farmer.

But here I would like to say that there is the good farmer and there is the bad farmer, and from my seat here further to say a word first of all about the good farmer. He is the man who when he reaps his stuff, grades it and sees that he does everything in accordance with the wishes of Government. But there is the bad farmer and it is about him particularly I would like to say a few words. It is being found that some of them, to use a local colloquialism, are not playing the game. They try to mix bad produce with good ones and not only delay the work of the Organization but cause some friction, because undoubtedly when that produce is received at the Depot and is graded the bad portion must inevitably be rejected, and that particular farmer sometimes feels that he has been done in the eye. But that is not the case; it is because he has not carried out his end of the bargain. I do urge on the farmers that if they want the prices to be maintained, it is up to them to do their part and they must try to assist the Organization to carry on the good work.

The second part of the motion deals with what is known as Government's Guarantee. The position is very simple. Government guarantees the minimum prices beyond a period of three years. It is felt that this Council should approve of the proposal because, after all is said and done, it is not sufficient to require a farmer to cultivate his land merely on the assurance of his receiving a certain price this particular year only. I am unable to predict what the Depot's prices will be after the 30th June next year, but I have every reason to believe it will take some time before Government's

guarantee is brought to an end. From all around I hear that both guarantees find favour with the parties concerned, and I have no doubt this motion will receive the unanimous approval of this Council.

Mr. EDUN: I take this opportunity to congratulate the Legislative Council Food Production Committee on its very gratifying success so far as food production is concerned. As a member of that Committee, sir, when I started I was supposed to be the strongest critic of that Committee. I believed more in the production drive, and I stated definitely in the Committee that more attention should be paid to local production. If I am to make comparison of the guarantee of \$50,000 to farmers in this country as against subsidization of nearly \$1,000,000, then I say we have done exceedingly well to pay \$50,000 to get all the food we have as against the imported articles. It is indeed gratifying. \$50,000 alone to guarantee the farmers and to be able to export is indeed splendid. What I am pleased to say although there may be some criticism against the bad farmer, due credit must be given to the farmers and peasants generally for following up Government's lead in this direction. The members of the Legislative Council Food Production Committee ought to be congratulated on affording the members of the District Committees an opportunity to do everything in their own way in the districts so as to accelerate the drive. Having seen the result this is the time that this Council ought to pay tribute to the District Committees for doing their job so thoroughly. I am a member also of one of the District Committees in West Demerara. I have seen the work which is being done there, and it is being done very carefully indeed.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara is very right when he says we cannot allow in these modern days our peasants to be victimized by the fluctuation

of prices, and for that matter if this Council had to vote \$100,000 I would not reduce it because, as I see it, there would be no starvation in this country. I want to impress on every inhabitant of British Guiana to cultivate a taste for local products rather than to yearn after the imported articles. I would rather, if I were a fish eater, get the fresh fish of the Colony than yearn for salt fish. Therefore I would go further and use the same machinery to create a wider scope in the industry not only just to produce plantains and cassava but to produce a variety of crops of the kind we import into this Colony. Why cannot we produce tallow, which we import so much and which is subsidized? Therefore I would recommend that this very Committee should examine whether or not we should not restrict the importation of certain kinds of food. We are aiming at self-sufficiency, and we are working in the right direction. If credit is due, I want to say definitely here this afternoon that this country has to thank His Excellency Sir Gordon Lethem for having done his level best as Head of the Administration and Head of the Legislative Council Food Production Committee and given us the lead in the right direction. The Members of the Legislative Council Food Production Committee, Mr. Hanschell and others ought to be complimented, and this Council ought to pay tribute to those members in the districts also who have given their very best in the acceleration of food production whereby they have given service to British Guiana.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Being a member also of the Legislative Council Food Production Committee and of a District Committee I am sorry I cannot join the hon. Nominated Member in his congratulations, but what I will do is to congratulate the farmers of the whole country for having risen to the occasion and followed the lead of the Legislative Council Food Production Committee and the District Committees.

They have produced more food than we can consume. I think it is a credit and an exhibition of what the people in this Colony can do when the occasion arises for them to do. But I must say I am disappointed in so far as the guaranteed prices are concerned. I am sure that the Chairman of the Committee is not disappointed at my opposition to the prices. It happened that I was not at the meeting at which those prices were fixed. The Colony has succeeded even beyond the hopes of many in the country; they never thought the people of this country would have risen to the standard they did. Why then at this very moment discourage the farmer with unremunerative prices for certain articles? I know I will be told that so far as sweet cassava is concerned the price is that fixed at the commencement of the drive. Admitting that was the guaranteed price fixed at the commencement of the Food Production drive, may I ask what was the result of it? Did we get as much as we had expected in the first six or eight months? I say, sir, that the guaranteed prices of $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per lb. for bitter and sweet cassava respectively are not encouraging at all. I think that instead of those prices there should have been no guarantee because the result would be the same. We will find that sweet cassava and bitter cassava for that matter and also plantains will not meet the requirements of the consumers of the Colony with the prices fixed. We have succeeded to this extent, and I am appealing to the Members of the Legislative Council Food Production Committee to consider these three items. I am asking that you be good enough to defer this motion until this matter has been considered by the Food Production Committee. I do not see why after we have reached this standard of production that we should by any action of ours do something that would be interpreted by the masses to mean something else unforeseen. I am appealing to Your Excel-

lency that this motion be deferred until the matter is reconsidered by the Food Production Committee.

Mr. JACKSON: I rise to support the motion as well as its immediate passage through this Council. I am satisfied that the prices guaranteed by Government are ample and that at no time in the history of this Colony have such large prices been obtained, as for example for plantains, as at the present time. Government's guarantee to the farmers in respect of prices is timely, and I am quite sure there are very few farmers, if any except perhaps those known by the hon. Member for Western Berbice, who are not satisfied with the prices offered by Government. I am satisfied with the production. The volume of production speaks for itself, and if we have sufficient bottoms to send goods away from here a good deal of the products of the land can be exported at the present time. Government's guarantee to the farmers is timely and opportune, and it is appreciated. I think we will be making a tremendous mistake if we do not pass the motion before the Council today. The Legislative Council Food Production Committee has done, in my opinion, the best that can be done in the circumstances, and I trust the Council will pass this motion today.

Mr. JACOB: I think all hon. Members who have spoken are members of the Food Production Committee. I happen not to be a member of the Committee, but I do receive reports of meetings of the Committee held in my constituency. In fact I am a member of the District Food Production Committee by virtue of my membership of this Council, but I am not familiar with all the working details not being on the Committee. It is disheartening to see Members disagree and to hear what they are thinking about the matter. I do not agree with the hon. Member for Western Berbice that there should be no guaranteed minimum price for products of the farmer,

In that case he will not get anything at all. At the present time the prices are in some cases double the guaranteed prices. Take plantains; the guaranteed price is 1c. per lb. and the price that is being paid today is 2c. per lb. Sweet Cassava—the minimum guaranteed price is $\frac{1}{2}$ c. per lb. and the price paid today is $1\frac{1}{2}$ c. In other cases they are slightly in excess and in others a great deal in excess of the guaranteed prices. I think that is security to the farmer, and it is well that is continued. I have never been very much heartened by the work of this Committee. I am glad to see at the present time there is a little surplus after nearly three years' work. My hon. friend says there is a large surplus. There may be a large surplus of plantains and cassava, but there is certainly not a surplus of beef, coffee, citrus fruits, and I am most concerned with those. We are importing coffee when this Colony exported up to 500 tons some years ago. We are importing edible oil; we are importing live stock; we are importing various kinds of meat in larger quantities. We have only got a little more ground provisions, and so I throw out the suggestion that hon. Members go into the matter very carefully as to where there will not be an immediate shortage or very soon. There is plenty of rice and also of provisions, but after the present spell of dry weather to be followed by heavy rains maybe next year January, February and March, you will then see that you have not the same surplus.

The Committee is not in a position to congratulate itself yet. I see the Committee has been congratulating itself on the very excellent work done. I see the B.P.I. Supplement writes very congratulatory things about what has happened. I hope that Publicity Bureau will publish the unsatisfactory things that will happen sooner or later. I think that in these matters we should have both sides of the picture. I do not think Government puts both sides of the picture every time. In very few

cases Government does that. I advise caution and that the Committee does its work in such a way as to prevent the importation of several articles including meat and coffee.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: May I just correct a misstatement or misunderstanding of my statement. I said I would have preferred no minimum price guaranteed so far as plantain is concerned but that it is left alone. It is not that I do not appreciate the minimum price fixed. I happen to know the people of this Colony, and we all know that the minimum price fixed for any article becomes the price on the market.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I would like to say first of all that when I opened the debate I did not think I was speaking as a member of the Legislative Council Food Production Committee but merely as Chairman of the *ad hoc* Marketing Organization which is more or less responsible for this motion having reached the Council today. I am, however, grateful, despite the criticisms levelled by the hon. Member for North-Western District, for the way in which he attempted to elucidate the position for the benefit of the hon. Member for Western Berbice. What the hon. Member for North-Western District said is perfectly true. These prices are minimum guaranteed prices. It will be observed the note on the Schedule says: "The Depot will pay not less than these prices until July, 1945,....." For the benefit of Members I repeat that the actual position is this: In respect of one item on this Schedule the Depot actually pays a higher price and strange enough a higher price is being paid for an article that is more abundant. That is Government's policy. Government wants to assist the farmers, and that policy is being carried out.

I do not understand the logic of the hon. Member for Western Berbice, when he said he would prefer no price fixed because from his experience minimum

prices become the maximum. If he had gone on to say in times of scarcity, I would have agreed with his logic. When there is a glut it is a different question. Take the item named by the hon. Member for Western Berbice. I venture to suggest there would have been no price at all, because the actual position is that what the Depot is buying is more than can be consumed by the people and a good lot of it is being converted into feed for stock. Here I would like to pause just to make this observation. There is one member of the Committee who is exceedingly glad over the situation, and that is the Director of Agriculture who keeps on saying "Why complain about surplus of cassava; it is a good thing for the pigs." It has helped to increase our meat production. What we lose as food we get again as meat production.

There is one other point to which I would like to refer and that is a remark made by the hon. Member for North Western District. I do not know whether it was intended to be cynical, or the hon. Member intended to destroy the efforts of the Committee that has been responsible for this work when he made the observation that this is the time of the year when we usually have a surplus. The hon. Member may be right, but what he does not know is that the records show that in the case of many of these items the figures are 3, 4, 5, and 6 times better than they have been for some years over the same period. While this is the time of the year when there is a surplus the plantains which are coming in now are 3, 4 or 5 times greater than they were last year. The same applies to cassava and things of that kind. I am sure that if that information was available to the hon. Member he would appreciate the work done not only by the Committee but by the farmers themselves. They realized that they were called upon to make an effort and they did so. There is no doubt about it that when they did so they knew that Government was behind them.

Another point is the production of peas. One hon. Member referred to dholl and another Member to peas. I will deal with the latter item first. I suppose he means black eye peas. All I can tell him is that it is one of the most difficult articles to produce. Weather conditions play a large part in its production, and unless the farmer is very careful his loss may be very great. In one case that was brought to my notice 20 or 30 acres were actually planted with black eye peas, but as a result of adverse weather conditions the yield was negligible and the loss was exceedingly great. This affords me an opportunity to embark on a little bit of advertising if I may. There is another peas that we can produce quite well with not the same amount of risk, and I am in the happy position to say that the supply is very good. I refer to what is known as Vita beans. That is a trade name, but the correct agricultural name is Burma beans. I am told that they have very high nutritional value. I use them all the time. I formerly used black eye peas, but since I heard of these Vita beans I have been using them, and I am full of vitamin B.

There is also the question of storage. Unfortunately, of course, it is not possible to keep ground provisions for any length of time. As hon. Members know, they deteriorate rapidly on account of our climate, and in view of the large quantities of produce coming in the storage facilities are very severely taxed. Unfortunately there is not much we can do by way of putting aside some of it for the rainy day. We are storing some peas in tins but I am afraid there is very little we can do in the way of storing ground provisions, such as cassava and plantains, because after a few days plantains become ripened. I questioned whether we can do anything in the way of cold storage. What we have to do is to market whatever comes in to the best advantage, and people should take advantage of the surplus available.

In so far as plantains are concerned there is one little redeeming feature, and that is we can export some of it. Actually from last month permission was granted to export a certain quantity, but for some reason, due to shipping difficulties, I believe, it was not possible to export the quantity for which permission was given during that month. Since then, as a result of improvement in the situation, the Committee at once advised the Control Authorities that an additional quantity might be released, and it is hoped that during this month at any rate a greater quantity will be shipped. I do not hold out very much hope in that respect. I do not think we can count on the export trade, but plantains have nothing to do with our economic position. The main idea behind the scheme is to carry ourselves along the road of self-sufficiency, and I am very grateful to hon. Members for the support they have given the motion.

The PRESIDENT: Does the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) wish to press for a deferment of the motion?

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Yes sir.

The PRESIDENT: Is it seconded? I am afraid it is not seconded. I have just one point to raise. It has been represented to me rather strongly that the questions of food production and nutrition should be tied up. In other words it is felt that with all our endeavours we are producing too much starchy food. I mentioned it to the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) who has promised to take the matter up with the Legislative Council Food Production Committee. I may just mention it today that it seems to me that if it were possible to have experts on nutrition, not as members of the Committee but as advisers who would come in when required, we may derive some advantage. The Committee might be advised to direct its attention to various forms of food. It is only a suggestion.

Mr. de AGUIAR: Following upon Your Excellency's discussion with me on the matter action has been taken by the Legislative Council Food Production Committee, and the Director of Agriculture is pursuing the matter with the Chairman of the Nutrition Committee.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you.

Motion put, and agreed to.

ACCEPTANCE OF C.D.W. FUNDS FOR RICE EXPANSION SCHEMES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move that item IX on the Order Paper be postponed. The real object of the motion is to record the Council's acceptance of the funds, and in particular to record the conditions under which these grants have been made, but I think Members would also require to know something more about these schemes, and as Council Paper No. 21 of 1944, comprising despatches to the Secretary of State on the subject, was only laid on the table this morning I think it would be in order if this motion were postponed.

Agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1943) BILL, 1944.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move that the following Bill be read the first time:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to allow and confirm certain additional expenditure incurred in the year ended the thirty-first day of December, 1943."

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: As Members know, this is merely a formal

act of the Legislature confirming excess expenditure which occurred during the year, 1943, and which has already been approved by the Council, but is not embraced in the original Appropriation Bill of the year. The items set out in the Schedule have at various times come before the Council on Schedules of Additional Provision and been passed. I move that the Bill be read the second time.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause without discussion.

The Council resumed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I move that the Bill be read a third time and passed.

Mr. J. A. LUCKHOO seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

The PRESIDENT: We have now come to the end of the Order of the Day. Subject to Your agreement I would suggest that the Council resume on Wednesday next at the usual time, 12 noon, to consider private motions. I wish to explain that it is my intention, as far as possible, to clear the decks of all outstanding business before the return of Sir Gordon Lethem. There are three private motions—one by the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member (Mr. Roth) about mosquito netting, and two by the Fifth and Sixth Nominated Members regarding amendments of the Spirits Ordinance.

The Council adjourned until Wednesday, 18th October, at noon.